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230630Z Sep 05

UNCLAS LAGOS 001470

SIPDIS

DOE FOR DAS JBRODMAN AND CGAYE  
TREASURY FOR ASEVERENS AND SRENANDER  
DOC FOR KBURRESS  
STATE PASS TRANSPORTATION MARAD  
STATE PASS USAID FOR GWEYNAND AND SLAWAETZ  
STATE PASS EX-IM FOR JRICHTER AND KVRANICH  
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND JEDWARDS  
STATE PASS TDA FOR NCABOT AND BTERNET

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ELAB](#) [EPET](#) [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: LAGOS: THIRD LABOR UPDATE

REF: LAGOS 1448

1. The Nigerian Labor Congress's (NLC) September 20 rally against increased fuel prices in Kano attracted at least 50,000 people and proceeded relatively peacefully to the Governor's office. Kano State Governor Ibrahim Shekaruau addressed the protesters, supporting their cause and calling the fuel price hike "unjust." The rally dispersed without incident. However, the protest reportedly paralyzed commercial activity in Kano. Schools, banks, and shops were closed. It was the largest such gathering since the opposition ANPP organized rallies against the Obasanjo government two years ago.

2. The next major NLC rally is scheduled for September 22, in Yola, Adamawa State, home of the Vice President. Another follows in Owerri, Imo State on September 26. Several organizers have voiced concerns over security for the Owerri rally. The current crisis in Imo between Governor Udenwa and pro-Obasanjo officials of the Imo State chapter of the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) can be expected to fuel the anti-government fervor of the rally. Rallies are also expected in other areas, including potential flash points such as Abuja and Port Harcourt. (Note: Port Harcourt is especially volatile at present due to the September 21 arrest of militia leader Dokubo Asari.)

3. The rallies, planned by the NLC and several civil society organizations through the Labor and Civil Society Coalition (LASCO), have been successful in mobilizing people and in maintaining order. However, the efficacy of the rallies in forcing the GON to lower fuel prices remains uncertain. The lack of violence at the rallies so far is noteworthy. This may be due in part to a change in law, since on June 24, 2005 the Abuja High Court annulled the law which required demonstrators to obtain advance written permission from the police. The peaceful result may also be due to the fact that the NLC met with the Acting Inspector General of Police, Sunday Ehindero, prior to the rallies.

BROWNE